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PTO/SB/05 (4/98)
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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. 10392/46901

First Inventor or Application Identifier Steven M.H. WALLMAN

Title METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CORPORATE VOTING

Express Mail Label No.

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☒ * Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☒ Specification [Total Pages 57] 1
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
 - Descriptive title of the invention
 - Cross References to Related Applications
 - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
 - Reference to Microfiche Appendix
 - Background of the invention
 - Brief Summary of the invention
 - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
 - Detailed Description
 - Claim(s)
 - Abstract of the Disclosure
3. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 12] 1
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 2] 1
 - a. ☒ Newly executed (original or copy)
 - b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 16 completed)
 - i. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
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5. ☐ Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
6. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
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 - a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
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ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

7. ☒ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
8. ☐ 37 C.F.R. § 3.73(b) Statement ☐ Power of Attorney
(when there is an assignee)
9. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
10. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
11. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
12. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
13. ☒ * Small Entity Statement(s) ☐ Statement filed in prior application
(PTO/SB/09-12) Status still proper and desired
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☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No: _____

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**STATEMENT CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS
(37 CFR 1.9(f) & 1.27(c))--SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN**Docket Number (Optional)
10392/46901Applicant, Patentee, or Identifier: Steven M.H. Wallman

Application or Patent No.: _____

Filed or issued: _____

Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CORPORATE VOTING

I hereby state that I am

- ☐ the owner of the small business concern identified below.
☐ an official of the small business concern empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below.

NAME OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN FOLIO [fnl] Inc.ADDRESS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN Suite 200, 8401 Old Courthouse Road
Vienna, Virginia 22182

I hereby state that the above identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR Part 121 for purposes of paying reduced fees to the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Questions related to size standards for a small business concern may be directed to: Small Business Administration, Size Standards Staff, 409 Third Street, SW, Washington, DC 20416.

I hereby state that rights under contract or law have been conveyed to and remain with the small business concern identified above with regard to the invention described in:

- ☐ the specification filed herewith with title as listed above.
☒ the application identified above.
☐ the patent identified above.

If the rights held by the above identified small business concern are not exclusive, each individual, concern, or organization having rights in the invention must file separate statements as to their status as small entities, and no rights in the invention are held by any person, other than the inventor, who would not qualify as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c) if that person made the invention, or by any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d), or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e).

Each person, concern, or organization having any rights in the invention is listed below:

- ☒ no such person, concern, or organization exists.
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Separate statements are required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to the invention stating their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1.27)

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b))

NAME OF PERSON SIGNING

MICHAEL A. DAWSON

TITLE OF PERSON IF OTHER THAN OWNER

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SIGNATURE

[Signature]

DATE

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**APPLICATION
FOR
UNITED STATES
LETTERS
PATENT**

**METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR CORPORATE VOTING**

INVENTOR:

STEVEN M. H. WALLMAN

ASSIGNEE:

FOLIO[fn], Inc.

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CORPORATE VOTING

RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 The present invention is related to U.S. Patent Application No. 09/038,158 and to U.S. Patent Application No. 09/139,020, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/038,158. Both applications disclose a portfolio manager for creating and managing portfolios of securities, in which, among other things, trades are aggregated and/or netted prior to execution.

10

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

 The present invention relates generally to methods and apparatuses for voting shares of corporations held by investors, and more particularly to a method and apparatus for voting shares held by an investor in a [large] publicly traded corporation.

15 Traditionally, an issuer of shares (e.g., a publicly-held corporation) sends a copy of the corporate action notification or the proxy statement to each individual shareholder via regular mail. When the shareholders receive it, they analyze the corporate action notification or proxy statement, and depending on the type of notification, the shareholders may mark their votes on the action notification document or the proxy card

20 and return the papers to the issuer via regular mail. For proxies, the shareholders can alternatively indicate their preferences by attending the shareholders' meeting, during which the votes are formally cast. At the end of a voting period, the corporate election official manually goes through all the returned corporate action notifications and proxy

voting cards and counts the votes for each issue. These votes are added to the votes that were cast by individuals attending the shareholders' meeting. This manual process is very labor intensive, slow, complicated and prone to error, as well as costly to the issuer.

- 5 To attempt to remedy these problems, some corporations, such as Microsoft Corporation, send their proxies by electronic mail to their shareholders, thereby allowing shareholders to return their proxy by simply replying to the email. While simplifying the process somewhat for the corporation, this electronic mail-based process still requires shareholder attention to every received proxy statement and corporate
- 10 action notification.

- The current system of mailing proxies to elicit shareholder votes was devised in an era when investors typically held relatively small numbers of different securities. For example, investors typically owned a handful of stocks. As the number of publicly traded companies has increased significantly along with a concomitant awareness of
- 15 modern portfolio theory (i.e., the idea that diversification of one's investments will result in statistically better and predictable overall returns), the numbers of different securities held by an individual has been increasing to the point where managing one's proxies can become difficult, if not cumbersome. According to the theory, investors should hold as many as twenty or thirty different securities to be sufficiently diversified
- 20 against risk. Moreover, if the number of Initial Public Offerings continues at the recent pace, the number of different securities available to individual investors may become truly large.

In apparent recognition of the difficulty in managing one's proxies, a system for managing proxies was developed, ProxyEdge 2000, which is available from ADP (Automatic Data Processing, Inc.) of Roseland, NJ. ProxyEdge 2000 is a Windows®-based software package that allows one to electronically vote and maintain records on publicly traded securities for accounts custodied at banks and brokers. While simplifying the record-keeping aspects to some degree, this system still requires users to review proxy statements and determine how to vote their shares.

Given the extremely small percentage voice an individual shareholder owns in a publicly traded stock, the amount of effort required to manage and vote one's proxies is significantly disproportionate with such an extremely small voice, hence many investors currently ignore proxies.

In addition, many small investors do not vote their proxies because they do not understand the issues discussed in the proxy statements (or are unwilling to invest the time to understand the issues), they do not know any of the individuals running for the board of directors, nor do they believe their votes will have any impact on the result. The end result is that management of large publicly traded companies can become entrenched, ossified and unresponsive to the concerns of shareholders, despite what at least superficially appears to be a relatively representative process.

The present invention is therefore directed to the problem of developing a method and apparatus for enabling a shareholder to manage and vote shares in a simple and efficient manner, which is particularly suitable for voting and managing large numbers of proxies.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention solves this problem by enabling a shareholder to enter preferences regarding how to vote his or her proxies into a computer system, which then
5 screens the received proxies and automatically enters the shareholder's preferences onto the proxy card. The completed proxy cards are then automatically returned to the election authority at the proper time.

In addition, the present invention provides a user interface by which a manager or administrator of a particular group desirous of encouraging voting in a particular
10 manner (termed herein as an "affinity group"), can enter voting recommendations on corporate actions for corporations in the system. Many different affinity groups (i.e., third parties with specified agendas, such as environmental groups, political associations, investor associations, stock analysts, or other groups or trade associations) can be represented, thereby allowing the user to determine how to vote based on the
15 affinity groups' known support or opposition to particular corporate actions.

The present invention also permits users to vote in opposition to or support of voting recommendations of particular affinity groups.

Thus, in combination the elements of the present invention create a powerful method and apparatus for enabling shareholders to vote in an informed manner and yet
20 do so in an efficient and simple manner.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG 1 depicts an exemplary embodiment of a system according to the present invention.

FIG 2 depicts another exemplary embodiment of a system according to the
5 present invention.

FIGs 3A-L depict various exemplary web pages in a graphical user interface according to one aspect of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

10 **Overview**

The present invention provides an Internet-based corporate action notification and proxy voting system to alert investors of any corporate action notifications issued by companies in which they own stock (or other assets/liabilities) and to solicit and track shareholder votes on various corporate issues. The present invention provides the
15 capability to manage corporate voting, as well as to simplify corporate voting by enabling shareholders to vote their shares in accordance with third party recommendations.

According to one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the system includes a graphical user interface (referred to herein as the organizational interface) by
20 which various organizations (including management of the same or even different corporation, and possibly competing corporations) can provide recommendations to voting shareholders. The organizational interface enables special interest or other

organizations to provide recommendations as to how to vote in upcoming corporate elections or other corporate votes.

One exemplary embodiment of the organizational interface includes a dedicated web site on the Internet or other public computer forum to which officers or other duly
5 authorized agents of a given organization may download voting recommendations for particular corporations. If a particular organization desires to publish its recommendations for certain corporate actions, it requests a form on the web site, which allows the organization to submit voting recommendations in accordance with the web site's format. Once the completed recommendations are received, they are stored in a
10 database, whose contents are displayed on the web site. Registered users can then determine which organizations, if any, have published share voting recommendations for particular companies. For example, on the web site a user can specify a corporation in which the user is interested to determine whether any affinity groups have registered share voting recommendations for that corporation.

15 One possible way of specifying the corporation is to enter the stock symbol (or other identifier or name) of the publicly traded company into a search engine. The result from the search would be a list depicting organizations or affinity groups that have entered voting recommendations for the specified company.

The user can then choose to create a link between one of the listed organizations
20 and the user's preferences as to how the user intends to vote. Alternatively, the user can specify multiple organizations in which the user is interested regarding voting recommendations. The final vote for the user could then depend on a majority decision

or even a weighted majority decision. For example, the user could specify five different organizations, and the voting recommendations could be based on three or more of the five organizations that agree on a particular issue.

Alternatively, the user could give more weight to a specific organization without
5 delegating the decision completely to any one organization by applying weights to each selected organization. For example, the user could specify five organizations, but give a 26% weight each to two organizations and a 16% weight each to three other organizations, which would provide a majority if the two higher weighted organizations agree and require at least one of the higher weighted organizations to always be in the
10 majority. In this exemplary embodiment, any weight to any affinity group can be established by the user.

Once the link is established, the user's shares are then voted in accordance with the recommendations of the organization to which the user has established the link without further action on the part of the user. Thus, with a single click of a mouse, the
15 user can establish voting patterns for all of the user's shares in a given company. Moreover, the user can use the same voting recommendations for all of its holdings, such as always following the recommendations of a particular organization for all corporations in which the user owns shares.

The exemplary embodiment of the system of the present invention includes a
20 graphical user interface that enables shareholders to establish preferences by which they will vote on future corporate actions, which greatly simplifies shareholder voting. An exemplary embodiment of the graphical user interface includes a web site (intranet or

Internet based) that provides a list of affinity groups with voting recommendations from which a user may select as input for future voting.

Another exemplary embodiment of the system of the present invention includes a user interface via which information is rendered. Information can include, for
5 example, names and/or stock symbols of corporations, descriptions of corporate actions, lists of affinity groups, positions of affinity groups, recommendations of affinity groups, and/or voting preferences of shareholders. Information is "rendered" by making it comprehensible to the recipient. For example, information in textual or graphic form can be rendered to a human recipient when it is displayed on a screen visible to the
10 recipient, or printed on a piece of paper at a printer, etc. Audio information can be rendered when it is played through a speaker, or a telephone unit, etc. Audiovideo information can be rendered when it is shown on a television, displayed on a computer screen, etc. An example of a player for e-mail information is the Outlook e-mail program manufactured by the Microsoft Corporation of Redmond, Washington. An
15 example of a player for information on a World Wide Web page is the Netscape Navigator, manufactured by Netscape Communications of Mountain View, California.

By enabling a shareholder to select a "trusted" third party to investigate the issues involved and to recommend how to vote, the present invention enables recommending organizations to leverage their research regarding how to vote into
20 potentially millions of normally unvoted shares, or shares that often simply vote with management. This creates the necessary incentive for heretofore silent organizations to investigate and provide voting recommendations for interested shareholders. Given the

relatively small ownership percentage each of these shareholders usually owns, few shareholders can justify the expense in time to research and fully understand the issues included in many proxy statements. The present invention creates both the incentive for such research and the simplicity of voting that will result in, for the first time, informed
5 corporate voting. Consequently, management of publicly traded corporations will have to deal with the recommending organizations and respond to their issues, which to date few organizations do.

The present invention enables users to specify their preferences once and then continue to vote in corporate actions with little or no input. The resulting simplicity
10 enables shareholders to properly manage and own shares in a relatively vast number of different corporations.

As used herein, a “corporate action notification” is a document (in either hard or soft copy format, e.g., electronic format) used to provide shareholders with specific corporate information. This document may contain questions on which the shareholder
15 needs to vote or specify their preferences.

As used herein, a “proxy” is a document providing shareholders with information necessary to vote in an informed manner on various issues affecting a corporation. This document includes information on closely held shares. Shareholders can and often do give management their proxy, representing the right and responsibility
20 to vote their shares as recommended in the proxy statement.

Exemplary Embodiment

One exemplary embodiment of the present invention includes an electronic proxy voting system to which is coupled a graphical user interface via which shareholders enter voting preferences and affinity groups enter voting recommendations.

- 5 Once the voting recommendations and voting preferences are entered, the system automatically completes the proxies in accordance with the entered voting preferences and voting recommendations.

As an exemplary illustration of the term “automatically”, a proxy can be automatically completed when it is completed without substantial human involvement.

- 10 For example, in one embodiment, a proxy can be completed fully-automatically, wherein there is no human involvement. In another exemplary embodiment, a proxy can be completed quasi-automatically, wherein the only human involvement is that needed to initiate a process by which the proxy is completed. In yet another exemplary embodiment, a proxy can be completed semi-automatically, wherein a list of voting
15 recommendations and preferences, along with the proxy, are communicated to a human and the human selects the vote responses on the proxy that best meet the recommendations and/or preferences by, for example, selecting the response and clicking a “Select” button on a computer screen.

- In this exemplary embodiment, the issuer (typically the corporation) first notifies
20 the electronic proxy voting system of a new action notification or proxy in a hardcopy or electronic format. The electronic proxy system then transforms all data not currently in electronic format to electronic format, which can be accessed over the Internet. The

system then notifies all eligible shareowners of the new notification and its location on the Internet. Upon receiving such notification, shareholders can go to the specified Internet site to read the action notification document or proxy statement and cast their votes. The system tracks all the votes in a database, and at the end of the voting period

5 reports the results to the issuer.

The above exemplary embodiment includes several major components. FIG 1 depicts an exemplary architecture 100 of this embodiment. An administrator 1 sets up the notification information, reports results and prints billing reports. A voting system 2 lets the shareholders and affinity groups enter and edit votes. A proxy voting system

10 database 3 holds the notification information including the questions and votes. A portfolio management system 5 and its database 6 are coupled to the administrator and application server 4.

Administrator

15 One exemplary embodiment of the administrator 1 contains the graphical user interface for entering corporate action notification documents, information, questions and possible answers into the system. A user of the Administrator is a trained user who gathers the notification information from the documents sent by the issuer and enters that information into the system 10. The Administrator User Interface takes the

20 information and saves it in database tables, which are stored in a standard database, such as an Oracle® database.

One exemplary embodiment of the Administrator 1 is a java program that resides in the central controller within the portfolio management system 5 and which accesses the infrastructure enterprise java beans (EJBs) directly. EJBs are reusable server side business components that can be used from other java or non-java programs.

- 5 EJBs encapsulate the business logic and complexity of the data structures. The Administrator GUI contains a wizard-like user interface that lets the user enter data step by step.

Exemplary web pages are depicted in FIGs 3A-K. The administrator main screen contains access to all of the system features. The screen is arranged in tabs.

- 10 Each tab provides a subset of functionality, e.g., notifications, shareholder and affinity groups.

- FIG 3A depicts the user login screen 30 that enables the system to perform authentication of a given user by verifying a username entered in the username field 31 and a password entered in the password field 32. Potential users include shareholders, 15 affinity group officers, as well as system administrators.

- FIG 3B depicts an exemplary screen of the notifications tab 34. The notifications screen 34 displays the list of all corporate notifications in the system. The notifications are arranged in a tree format. The top-level folders are status types: entered 35, published 36 and expired 37. Next, the folders are broken down by the 20 company name, such as Oracle Computer 38, Dell Computer 39, Amazon.com 40 and eBay Inc 41. Each company folder will contain folders for different types of

notifications available for that company (for example, Proxy 42, 43, Corporate Action 44, etc.). The can contain notification objects that are leafs in the tree.

The administrator can find the notification in the tree, and depending on what state the notification is in, the user interface lets the user perform some actions on a
5 given notification. FIG 3C depicts the edit notification screen 46, in which the General tab 48 has been selected.

Creating and editing a notification uses the same type of user interface. The edit screen 46 is created in a separate window from the main application. The screen 46 contains editing fields and save and cancel buttons. The editing fields are separated into
10 three tabs: General Information 47, Questions 48 and Documents 49.

The Questions Tab, depicted in FIG 3D, contains a list of questions already in the document. There are also buttons to add 63, edit 64 and delete questions 65, which is accomplished via a dialog box 66, for example, which is shown in FIG 3E. The dialog box 66 permits selection of a type of question (e.g., proposal) 67 from a drop
15 down menu and entry of a question string in field 68.

The Documents Tab, depicted in FIG 3F, includes a list of notification related documents. Documents can be added or deleted using this interface.

The Affinity Groups screen 73, which is a tab in the main screen having tabs for notifications 71, shareholders 72 and affinity groups 73, and which is depicted in FIG
20 3G, includes a table 74 listing each affinity group in the system. There are three buttons – Add 75, delete 76 and edit 77. Clicking on each of these buttons 75-77 opens a dialog box 81, which is populated with name 78, description 79 and password 80 to

authenticate the user. Each row in the table 74 listing of affinity groups also has the affinity name 78, description 79 and password 80 depicted.

The Shareholders screen 73, depicted in FIG 3H, lists the shareholders 83 in the system, the notifications 84 on which they have voted, and whether they are attending the shareholder meeting 85. If so, the administrator can lock their votes from being entered into the electronic voting system.

Voting System

The voting system 2 is a collection of hyper-text markup language (HTML) web pages stored on a web server that allow a user to respond to any corporate notification offering or requiring shareholder feedback. Examples of corporate notifications include proxy cards, tender offers, stock splits, etc. The shareholder feedback can be simply a yes/no response to a proposal or as complex as a proxy card with numerous questions, question types and supporting documents.

In this embodiment, the HTML pages are accessible over a secured hyper-text transfer protocol (HTTP) connection (called HTTPS). Users are authenticated using passwords for each session. The HTML pages are generated using a server-side java technology called java server pages (JSP). JSP lets a developer write java code for handling the analytic chores and wrapping that java code within an HTML presentation.

The system receives a proxy announcement or other corporate notification from multiple outside sources. An administrator enters the proxy card information into the system, either by scanning or other means. The proxy card is then sent to the

appropriate users via email, for example, which also instructs the users as to the location on the web where voting takes place.

Shown in FIG 3I is the corporate activities page 87 that contains all links to all corporate notifications 88 that a given user is eligible to vote. The links may be
5 organized by security and notification type. Additional fields display the current status 89 (completed/not completed) and the response deadline 90.

Shown in FIG 3J is the corporate notification page 91. After selecting a particular corporate notification 92-95 on the corporate activities page, the user is presented with the corporate notification page 97, which is depicted in FIG 3K. Shown
10 in FIG 3K is a letter to the stockholders of Didax Company.

This page 97 has multiple frames. There is a frame with links to all the supporting documents and voting form 99, which is shown in FIG 3L. Supporting documents can include proxy statements, annual reports, or any other material relevant to the issues the shareholder must vote. Another frame displays the contents of these
15 documents as well as the voting form itself 99. Supporting documents may be stored in Adobe PDF format, which would require an Adobe Acrobat viewer, normally available for free from Adobe. After reading any supporting documents, the user will click on a link to the voting form.

The voting form 99 displays each question and provides an appropriate set of
20 inputs (e.g., checkboxes, radio buttons, text fields, etc.) based on the question type. There is also a “vote with management” button that automatically answers each question with management’s recommendations.

At this point, the user may review all questions and fill out the form.

Alternatively, if the shareholder wishes to attend the meeting in person, the shareholder may press a button that will create a legal proxy form in PDF format that the shareholder may print and take to the meeting.

- 5 If the user has previously cast votes on this voting form and is returning before the cutoff date, the form will display the user's saved choices. At this point, the user may change any of these choices and resubmit the form. The user may also press the "attend the meeting" button, which will invalidate the user's previous online votes and print out the legal proxy form. Once the user prints out the legal proxy form, the user is
- 10 locked out from further electronic voting to prevent voter fraud.

- The voting page 99 includes one column that displays the management's recommendations. Other columns display the recommendations of specified affinity groups. If the user is interested in tracking the opinions of special interest groups, the user may indicate this interest on an affinity group preference page, which lists all the
- 15 affinity groups with data in the system. Once selected by the user, these groups' recommendations will be displayed on this page.

- In addition, the user can select a button to link its votes with a specified affinity group, so that in the future other votes will be done automatically in accordance with the selected affinity group's recommendations without requiring further input from the user.
- 20 This capability ensures that the user can spend minimal time, if desired, on voting his or her shares.

Proxy Voting Database

The system keeps track of all proxy-related data and user votes in database tables in a database 3, such as an Oracle® database. Shareholder information is tracked by another database 6 used in processing shareholder investments from the Portfolio

5 Management System 5.

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/038,158 and U.S. Patent Application No. 09/139,020, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/038,158, disclose a portfolio manager for creating and managing portfolios of securities, in which, among other things, trades are aggregated and/or netted prior to executing certain
10 types of securities trades. Both U.S. Patent Application Nos. 09/038,158 and 09/139,020 are hereby incorporated by reference, as if repeated herein in its entirety, including the drawings.

In this database 3, the notification table is the main table. It contains information for each notification. A notification is identified by its system-generated
15 ID. Each notification contains the issuer information like CUSIP number and the description of the notification. This table may contain multiple notifications issued by the same issuer.

Alternate Embodiment

20 Referring to FIG 2, the present invention provides a computer-based system 101 for enabling investors (shown as user interfaces A-N 10, 11, 12) to vote shares automatically without necessarily their intervention so that investors with large and

diverse investment portfolios can manage their proxies efficiently. Thus, a user can enter once the user's preferences regarding present and future corporate votes, e.g., always follow management, always oppose management, always follow a particular industry expert's recommendations, etc., and the system will screen all future corporate
5 actions and enter the users' preferences on the proxy card and return the completed proxy card at the proper time.

The system 101 of the present invention includes a user interface 10-12 via which the investor enters his preferences as to how to vote his proxies. These preferences can include the above-discussed preferences.

10 Proxies are received by a proxy server 17 either by electronic communication with the various corporations A, B, ..., M (13-15) or by mail. For those corporations who communicate the proxies electronically, the proxy server serves as the interface to these corporations.

For those corporations that send proxies by mail, a manual entry system 18 is
15 provided, in which received proxies are converted into electronic format for subsequent processing by the system 101. In addition, the manual entry system 18 serves as an output to those corporations that must receive the completed proxies by mail or otherwise in hard copy.

Once the preferences are entered into the user interface, the computer-based
20 system 101 receives all of the proxy cards, screens the received proxies or corporate action notifications and statements and enters the investor's votes in accordance with

the stated preferences. The completed proxy cards are then returned to the company via electronic route, if available, or by regular mail for vote tallying.

User Interface

5 The user interface includes a personal computer and software via which the system presents several methods of voting the user's preferences. One possible user interface comprises a graphical user interface, such as a dedicated web site.

 Via the user interface, the system presents several groups who will recommend voting based on the group's stated goals. One possibility is that a group, such as
10 Greenpeace, will present recommendations on voting for each corporation involved. Many possible types of groups, individuals or organizations can be potentially represented, including competing corporations in which the user has interests.

 The user can then indicate to the system that the user wishes to follow (or even oppose) the recommendations of one of the stated groups. Alternatively, the investor
15 can select to vote with management or against management. Alternatively, the investor can select to vote based on some market expert for the particular trade sector. In this possible embodiment, each market sector has an expert who reviews the proxy statements and makes recommendations based on his review as to how to vote. The users then can select to follow this recommendation or not.

20 The user interface may include several layers of alternative voting, in case one of the layers does not have a recommendation for the particular vote. In addition, the user

interface provides for selecting multiple organizations for voting recommendations, and basing the ultimate vote on a position held by a majority of the selected organizations.

In addition, the user interface provides a filtering capability of proxies. Using this capability, the user can filter out proxies concerning strategic corporate decisions
5 from the more *pro forma* proxy votes. This allows the users to focus on the most significant votes and ignore the remaining votes. Under this capability, the system will assign a ranking to each proxy vote relative to some predetermined criteria. For example, a vote concerning a merger or acquisition may have a high ranking, whereas a vote concerning appointment of an accounting firm. This enables the user to focus
10 energy and time on the most significant votes.

Proxy Server

The proxy server consists of a standard server that can communicate with other computers. Proxies can be received in the form of electronic mail (e-mail), files sent by
15 file transfer protocols (ftp), for example, or any other standard electronic communication format. The proxy server 17 interacts with the various corporations either over the Internet 19 or any other communication network.

By transmitting a single tally of the shareholders' votes in a single electronic message, the present invention provides incentives to the corporations to create an
20 interface to the proxy server. The message can be sent in traditional email format, or other suitable format, depending upon the needs of the particular corporation.

Central Controller

The central controller 16 controls all aspects of the proxy system 101. As proxies are received from the various corporations, the central controller accumulates the proxies and records the due dates and returns the completed proxies by the designated due date. For those users that have not entered data into the proxy preference database, the central controller transmits messages to these users and alerts them to this deficiency. If data is not received in time for the proxies to be returned to the corporations, the central controller sends another message indicating that the proxy was returned incomplete (or was not returned).

10

Manual Entry Subsystem

The manual entry subsystem 18 serves as the entry point for those proxies that arrive via hardcopy. When the investor purchases a particular security, the investor designates a mailing address for the proxies, which is a Post Office Box operated by the system 1. For those corporations that transmit proxies by electronic mail, the investor enters the system e-mail address (e.g., proxies@foliotrade.com). The manual entry subsystem 18 then converts the hardcopy proxies into an electronic format for further processing by the system 1. The original proxy is retained at the manual entry subsystem 18 for later completion and return to the corporation. Once in electronic form, the proxies are sent to the central controller 16 via the proxy server 17 just like all other received proxies.

20

When the proxies are completed by the central controller 16, the completed proxies are returned to the corporation by the designated route, either electronically by return email, for example, or by mail via the manual entry subsystem 18. If the proxy must be returned by mail, the completed proxy is returned in electronic format to the
5 manual entry subsystem 18, which then prints the completed information onto the original proxy. The original proxy is then returned to the corporation that sent it.

In sum, the present invention significantly simplifies the management of diverse portfolios of investments by enabling investors to delegate the responsibility of investigating and comprehending corporate actions to parties whose interests are such
10 they will fully investigate the corporate actions. Once delegated via computer, the investor can have his or her shares voted continually in accordance with the stated preferences.

It should be noted that the above method for voting shares in a corporation, is applicable to many types of investments requiring user feedback and is not limited to the
15 embodiments discussed herein. For example, the present invention is applicable to any election in which the user desires to vote in accordance with a third party's recommendations, including political elections, in which for example a user desires to vote in accordance with a specifiable political party.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for voting shares comprising:
receiving preferences regarding how to vote a user's shares in a corporation in a
5 corporate voting; and
automatically voting the user's shares in accordance with the received
preferences.
2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
10 completing a corporate voting form in accordance with the received preferences.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
communicating a completed corporate voting form to the corporation.
- 15 4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
converting a hard copy of a corporate voting form into an electronic format.
5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
converting a hard copy of a corporate voting form into a computer readable and
20 communicable format.

6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
storing the preferences.
7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
5 storing the preferences in a database.
8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
communicating a plurality of organizations to the user from among which the
user can select to follow when voting the user's shares.
10
9. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
rendering a plurality of organizations to the user from among which the user can
select to follow when voting the user's shares.
- 15 10. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
receiving voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions.
11. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
receiving voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions from
20 an affinity group.

12. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

storing voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions.

13. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

5 entering voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions into a database.

14. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

10 providing a user interface by which an affinity group enters voting recommendations on one or more upcoming corporate actions.

15. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

providing one or more voting recommendations to the user.

15 16. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

providing one or more voting preferences to the user.

17. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

providing a layered set of alternative voting preferences for each user.

20

18. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

rendering a list of one or more affinity groups that provide voter recommendations on one or more corporate voting actions by one or more corporations.

5 19. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an indication of one or more of the affinity groups whose recommendations the user desires to consider when voting shares in at least one corporate action by at least one corporation.

10 20. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the user desires to follow when voting the user's shares.

21. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 receiving a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the user desires to oppose when voting the user's shares.

22. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

electronically communicating a user's vote to the corporation.

20

23. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user's share are voted based on a voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by the user.

24. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user's share are voted in accordance with a voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by the user.
- 5 25. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user's share are voted in opposition to a voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by the user.
26. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user's share are voted in accordance with a majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the user.
- 10 27. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user's share are voted in opposition to a majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the user.
28. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
- 15 receiving a weight to apply to each of a plurality of affinity group's recommendations.
29. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
- 20 receiving from the user a weight to apply to each of a plurality of affinity group's recommendations.

30. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

applying a weight to each of a plurality of affinity group's recommendations.

31. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user's share are voted in accordance

5 with a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the user.

32. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user's share are voted in opposition to

10 a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the user.

33. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an indication of a first affinity group whose recommendations the user desires to follow when voting shares in a corporate action; and

15 receiving an indication of a second affinity group whose recommendations the user desires to follow when voting share in the corporate action if the first affinity group does not provide a recommendation for the corporate action.

34. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

20 receiving a prioritized list of affinity groups whose recommendations the user desires to follow when voting shares in a corporate action.

35. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an indication of a plurality of affinity groups whose recommendations
the user desires to follow in a predetermined order in case a particular one or more of
the plurality of affinity groups does not provide a recommendation on a particular
5 corporate action of a particular corporation.

36. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

enabling an affinity group to review one or more corporate actions.

10 37. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

enabling an affinity group to provide recommendations on one or more corporate
actions.

38. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 enabling an affinity group to provide recommendations as to the affinity group's
position on one or more corporate actions.

39. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more
20 corporate actions, the affinity group including management.

40. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including an association.

5 41. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including a political organization.

42. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

10 receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including a special interest group.

43. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including a trade association.

44. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including a competing corporation.

20

45. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including an affiliated corporation.

5 46. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including a market analyst.

47. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

10 receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including a financial adviser.

48. A computer readable medium storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

15 receive preferences regarding how to vote a user's shares in a corporation in a corporate voting; and

vote the user's shares in accordance with the received preferences.

49. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the

20 processor to:

complete a corporate voting form in accordance with the received preferences.

50. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

communicate a completed corporate voting form to the corporation.

5 51. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

communicate a plurality of organizations to the user from among which the user can select to follow when voting the user's shares.

10 52. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

receive voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions from an affinity group.

15 53. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

provide one or more voting recommendations to the user.

54. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the
20 processor to:

receive an indication of one or more of the affinity groups whose recommendations the user desires to consider when voting shares in at least one corporate action by at least one corporation.

- 5 55. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

receive a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the user desires to follow when voting the user's shares.

- 10 56. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

receive a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the user desires to oppose when voting the user's shares.

- 15 57. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

electronically communicate a user's vote to the corporation.

58. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the user's shares are voted in
20 accordance with a voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by the user.

59. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the user's shares are voted in
opposition to a voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by
the user.

5 60. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the user's shares are voted in
accordance with a majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by
the user.

61. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the user's shares are voted in
10 opposition to a majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the
user.

62. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the instructions further cause the
processor to:

15 apply a weight to each of a plurality of affinity group's recommendations.

63. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the user's shares are voted in
accordance with a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups
selected by the user.

20

64. The medium according to claim 48, wherein the user's shares are voted in opposition to a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the user.

5 65. An apparatus for voting on a plurality of corporate actions involving a plurality of corporations, comprising:

a shareholder voting preference interface via which a shareholder enters one or more preferences regarding how to vote the shareholder's shares in future corporate votes; and

10 an affinity group interface via which one or more affinity groups can enter voting recommendations on specific corporate actions of one or more corporations.

66. The apparatus according to claim 65, wherein the shareholder voting preference interface is provided by a server.

15

67. The apparatus according to claim 65, wherein the affinity group interface is provided by a server.

68. The apparatus according to claim 65, further comprising a database storing the one
20 or more shareholder preferences and the voting recommendations of the one or more affinity groups.

69. The apparatus according to claim 65, further comprising a corporate interface for one or more corporations via which the one or more corporations transmit corporate action notifications and receive shareholder votes.

5 70. The apparatus according to claim 65, further comprising a corporate interface for one or more corporations via which the one or more corporations transmit corporate action notifications and receive shareholder votes, the corporate interface provided by a server.

10 71. The apparatus according to claim 65, further comprising a voting system comparing the one or more stored shareholder preferences and the stored voting recommendations of the one or more affinity groups and voting the shareholder's shares in accordance with the stored shareholder preferences and the stored voting recommendations.

15

72. A method for managing a plurality of shares held by a shareholder in a plurality of corporations comprising:

searching for a match between a plurality of preferences received from the shareholder as to how to vote shares and a plurality of corporate actions; and

20 if a match results, automatically voting in at least one of the plurality of corporate actions in accordance with at least one corresponding preference.

73. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving a plurality of preferences from the shareholder as to how to vote each of the plurality of shareholder's shares.

5 74. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving descriptions of a plurality of corporate actions.

75. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

storing the plurality of preferences.

10

76. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

storing the plurality of preferences in a database.

77. The method according to claim 72, further comprising storing the plurality of

15 preferences in advance of a corporate action.

78. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

completing a corporate voting form in accordance with the plurality of received preferences.

20

79. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

communicating a completed corporate voting form to a corresponding corporation.

5 80. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

converting a hard copy of a corporate voting form into an electronic format.

81. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

10 converting a hard copy of a corporate voting form into a computer readable and communicable format.

82. The method according to claim 72, wherein the plurality of preferences includes an indication of one or more organizations to authorize to vote at least part of the plurality of shares on behalf of the shareholder.

15

83. The method according to claim 72, wherein the plurality of preferences includes a selection of one or more organizations whose position on one or more corporate actions the shareholder desires to follow for at least some of the plurality of shares.

20 84. The method according to claim 72, wherein the plurality of preferences includes an indication that shares of a particular corporation are to be voted in accordance with a

first organization's stated position and other shares of the particular corporation are to be voted in accordance with a second organization's stated position.

85. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

- 5 communicating a plurality of organizations to the shareholder from among which the shareholder can select to follow when voting the shareholder's shares.

86. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

- 10 displaying a plurality of organizations to the shareholder from among which the shareholder can select to follow when voting the shareholder's shares.

87. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions.

15 88. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions from an affinity group.

89. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

- 20 storing voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions.

90. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

entering voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions into a database.

5 91. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

providing an interface by which an affinity group can enter voting recommendations on one or more upcoming corporate actions.

92. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

10 providing one or more voting recommendations to the shareholder.

93. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

providing one or more voting preferences to the shareholder.

15 94. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

providing a layered set of alternative voting preferences for the shareholder.

95. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

20 rendering a list of one or more affinity groups that provide recommendations regarding one or more corporate voting actions.

96. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving an indication of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the shareholder desires to consider when voting shares in at least one corporate action by at least one corporation.

5

97. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the shareholder desires to follow when voting the shareholder's shares.

10 98. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the shareholder desires to oppose when voting the shareholder's shares.

99. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

15 electronically communicating the shareholder's vote to the corresponding corporation.

100. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

voting the shareholder's shares in accordance with a voting recommendation of
20 one or more affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

101. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
voting the shareholder's shares in opposition to a voting recommendation of one
or more affinity groups selected by the shareholder.
- 5 102. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
voting the shareholder's shares in accordance with a majority position held by a
plurality of affinity groups selected by the shareholder.
- 10 103. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
voting the shareholder's shares in opposition to a majority position held by a
plurality of affinity groups selected by the shareholder.
104. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
receiving a weight to apply to each of a plurality of affinity group's
15 recommendations.
105. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
receiving from the shareholder a weight to apply to each of a plurality of affinity
group's recommendations.
- 20 106. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
applying a weight to each of a plurality of affinity group's recommendations.

107. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

voting the shareholder's shares in accordance with a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

5

108. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

voting the shareholder's shares in opposition to a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

10 109. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving an indication of a first affinity group whose recommendations the shareholder desires to follow when voting shares in a corporate action; and

receiving an indication of a second affinity group whose recommendations the shareholder desires to follow when voting share in the corporate action if the first

15 affinity group does not provide a recommendation for the corporate action.

110. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving an prioritized list of affinity groups whose recommendations the shareholder desires to follow when voting shares in a corporate action.

20

111. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
receiving an prioritized list of affinity groups whose recommendations the
shareholder desires to follow when voting shares in a corporate action.
- 5 112. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
receiving an indication of a plurality of affinity groups whose recommendations
the shareholder desires to follow in a predetermined order in case a particular one or
more of the plurality of affinity groups does not provide a recommendation on a
particular corporate action of a particular corporation.
- 10 113. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
enabling an affinity group to review one or more corporate actions.
114. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
15 enabling an affinity group to provide recommendations on one or more corporate
actions.
115. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:
enabling an affinity group to provide recommendations as to the affinity group's
20 position on one or more corporate actions.

116. The method according to claim 72, further comprising:

receiving recommendations from an affinity group regarding one or more corporate actions, the affinity group including one or more of the following: management, an association, a political organization, a special interest group, a trade association, a competing corporation, an affiliated corporation, a market analyst, and a financial adviser.

117. A computer readable medium storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

search for a match between a plurality of preferences received from the shareholder as to how to vote each of the shareholder's shares and a plurality of corporate actions; and

if a match results, vote in at least one of the plurality of corporate actions in accordance with at least one corresponding preference.

118. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

complete a corporate voting form in accordance with the received preferences.

119. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

communicate a completed corporate voting form to the corporation.

120. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

communicate a plurality of organizations to the shareholder from among which
5 the shareholder can select to follow when voting the shareholder's shares.

121. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

receive voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions from
10 an affinity group.

122. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

provide one or more voting recommendations to the shareholder.
15

123. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

receive an indication of one or more of the affinity groups whose
recommendations the shareholder desires to consider when voting shares in at least one
20 corporate action by at least one corporation.

124. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

receive a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the shareholder desires to follow when voting the shareholder's shares.

5

125. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

receive a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the shareholder desires to oppose when voting the shareholder's shares.

10

126. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:

electronically communicate a shareholder's vote to the corporation.

15 127. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the shareholder's shares are voted in accordance with a voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

128. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the shareholder's shares are voted
20 in opposition to a voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

129. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the shareholder's shares are voted in accordance with a majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

5 130. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the shareholder's shares are voted in opposition to a majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

131. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the instructions further cause the
10 processor to:

apply a weight to each of a plurality of affinity group's recommendations.

132. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the shareholder's shares are voted in accordance with a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups
15 selected by the shareholder.

133. The medium according to claim 117, wherein the shareholder's shares are voted in opposition to a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the shareholder.

20

134. A method for voting shares in a corporation, comprising:
developing recommendations regarding a corporate voting; and

communicating the recommendations to a service that automatically votes a user's shares in the corporation based on the recommendations.

135. The method according to claim 134, wherein the voting recommendations regard
5 one or more corporate actions.

136. The method according to claim 134, wherein the service votes the user's shares in accordance with the recommendations.

10 137. The method according to claim 134, wherein the service votes the user's shares in opposition to the recommendations.

138. The method according to claim 134, further comprising:
entering voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions.
15

139. The method according to claim 134, further comprising:
entering voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions into a database.

20 140. A computer readable medium storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:
develop recommendations regarding a corporate voting; and

communicate the recommendations to a service that automatically votes a user's shares in the corporation based on the recommendations.

141. The medium according to claim 140, wherein the voting recommendations
5 regard one or more corporate actions.

142. The medium according to claim 140, wherein the service votes the user's shares in accordance with the recommendations.

10 143. The medium according to claim 140, wherein the service votes the user's shares in opposition to the recommendations.

144. The medium according to claim 140, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:
15 enter voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions.

145. The medium according to claim 140, wherein the instructions further cause the processor to:
enter voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions into a
20 database.

146. A method for obtaining a vote of a user's shares in a corporation in a corporate voting comprising:
- communicating a corporate voting form for a user holding shares in a corporation; and
- 5 receiving the user's vote from a service that votes the user's shares.
147. The method according to claim 146, wherein the user's vote is received via a completed corporate voting form.
- 10 148. The method according to claim 146, wherein the corporate voting form is communicated electronically.
149. The method according to claim 146, wherein the user's vote is received electronically.
- 15 150. The method according to claim 146, wherein the service votes the user's shares based on recommendations provided by one or more affinity groups.
151. The method according to claim 146, wherein the service votes the user's shares
- 20 in accordance with recommendations provided by one or more affinity groups.

152. The method according to claim 146, wherein the service votes the user's shares
in opposition to recommendations provided by one or more affinity groups.
153. A computer readable medium storing instructions that, when executed by a
5 processor, cause the processor to:
communicate a corporate voting form for a user holding shares in a corporation;
and
receive the user's vote from a service that automatically votes the user's shares.
- 10 154. The medium according to claim 153, wherein the user's vote is received via a
completed corporate voting form.
155. The medium according to claim 153, wherein the corporate voting form is
communicated electronically.
- 15 156. The medium according to claim 153, wherein the user's vote is received
electronically.
157. The medium according to claim 153, wherein the service votes the user's shares
20 based on recommendations provided by one or more affinity groups.

158. The medium according to claim 153, wherein the service votes the user's shares
in accordance with recommendations provided by one or more affinity groups.

159. The medium according to claim 153, wherein the service votes the user's shares
5 in opposition to recommendations provided by one or more affinity groups.

160. A vote of a user's shares in a corporation assembled according to the the steps
comprising:
receiving preferences regarding how to vote a user's shares in a corporation in a
10 corporate voting; and
automatically submitting the vote in accordance with the received preferences.

161. The vote according to claim 160, wherein the preferences are received from the
user.

15

162. The vote according to claim 160, wherein the preferences are received
electronically.

163. The vote according to claim 160, wherein the vote is submitted to the
20 corporation.

164. The vote according to claim 160, wherein the vote is submitted electronically.

165. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
communicating a plurality of organizations to the user from among which the
user can select to follow when voting the user's shares.

5

166. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
rendering a plurality of organizations to the user from among which the user can
select to follow when voting the user's shares.

10 167. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
receiving voting recommendations regarding one or more corporate actions from
an affinity group.

168. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
15 providing one or more voting recommendations to the user.

169. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
rendering a list of one or more affinity groups that provide voter
recommendations on one or more corporate voting actions by one or more corporations.

20

170. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
receiving an indication of one or more of affinity groups whose
recommendations the user desires to consider when voting shares in at least one
corporate action by at least one corporation.

5

171. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
receiving a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the
user desires to follow when voting the user's shares.

10 172. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
receiving a selection of one or more affinity groups whose recommendations the
user desires to oppose when voting the user's shares.

173. The vote according to claim 160, wherein the user's share are voted based on a
15 voting recommendation of one or more affinity groups selected by the user.

174. The vote according to claim 160, wherein the user's share are voted based on a
majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the user.

20 175. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:
receiving a weight to apply to each of a plurality of affinity group's
recommendations.

176. The vote according to claim 160, further comprising:

applying a weight to each of a plurality of affinity group's recommendations.

- 5 177. The vote according to claim 160, wherein the user's share are voted based on a weighted majority position held by a plurality of affinity groups selected by the user.

ABSTRACT

A proxy voting system enables an investor with a large number of investments to efficiently manage and vote proxies. A shareholder enters preferences regarding how to vote his or her proxies into a computer system, which then screens the received proxies, automatically enters the shareholder's preferences onto the proxy card and returns the completed proxy card to the appropriate election authority at the proper time. The system includes a central controller, a user interface for each investor, a proxy server and a manual entry subsystem, which provides an interface for those corporations that are not equipped to handle electronic formatted proxies.

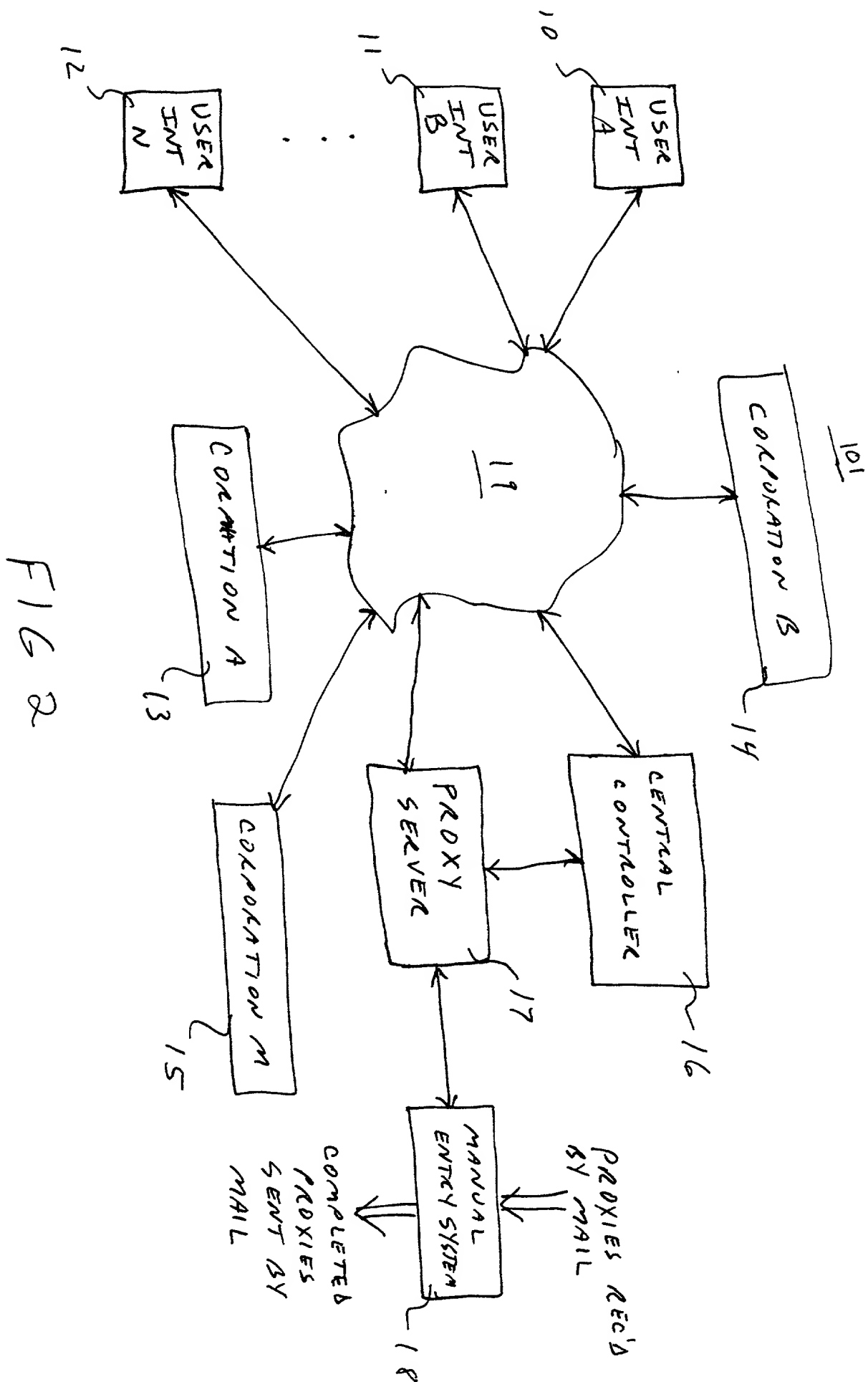


FIG 3A

A screenshot of a Windows-style application window titled "IoloTrade Administrator". The window contains two text input fields: "username" with the value "31" and "password" with the value "32". Below the fields are two buttons labeled "OK" and "CANCEL". A handwritten number "30" with a line pointing to the window's title bar is located to the right of the window.

A screenshot of the "IoloTrade Administrator" application window. The window has a title bar and three tabs: "Notifications", "Shareholders", and "Affinity Groups". The "Notifications" tab is active, showing a tree view of notification categories. The categories and their sub-items are: "Entered" (35), "Published" (36), "ORACLE CORP" (38), "DELL COMPUTER" (38), "Proxy" (39) with sub-items "12/20/99 - Annual Proxy" (42) and "12/18/98 - Annual Proxy" (43), "Corporate Action" (43), "AMAZON COM" (40), "EBAY INC" (41), and "Expired" (37). A handwritten number "34" with a line pointing to the right side of the window is located to the right of the main content area. At the bottom of the window is a grid of buttons: "Add", "Edit/View", "Publish", "View Results", "Delete", "Test", "Email Users", and "View Billing".

FIG 3B

48 46

folioTrade Administrator - Edit Notification

47 49

General Questions Documents

ID and Description

Cusip 51

Description 52

Important Dates

Cutoff Date 53

Notified Date 54

Email Notification Date 55

Issuer Notification Date 56

Effective Date 57

Expiration Date 58

Notification Type

Notification Type 59

Is Proxy ☐ ~ 60

Results

Username 61

Password 62

50

Save Notification Cancel

FIG 3C

FIG 3Δ

48

IoloTrade Administrator - Edit Notification

46

49

General Questions Attachments

1. To approve an amendment to the automatic option grant program for non-employee board members under the company's 1996 Stock Incentive Plan

2. To approve an amendment to the company's bylaws to increase the authorized number of directors to a maximum of fifteen (15).

3. To approve a certificate of amendment to the company's restated articles of incorporation to increase the authorized number of shares of common stock from 5,408,000,000 to 10,000,000,000.

63

64

65

Add Question Edit Question Delete Question

Save Notification Cancel

67

68

FIG 3E

48

47

49

46

Portfolio Administrator - Edit Notification

General Documents

Document Name	File Type	Description	Location
Annual Report	PDF	Lies and Fairies	database
Presidents Face	MS WORD	Bald, Glasses	database

Add Document Delete Document

Save Notification Cancel

FIG 3F

Julio Trade Administrator

Activity Groups

Group Name	Description	Password
Green Peace	Likes Green Things	2rd*we*
MADD		
FROG		

Julio Trade Administrator

Edit Activity Group

Name: Green Peace 78

Description: Likes Green Things 79

Password: 2rd*we* 80

Save Cancel Clear

Add Delete Edit

FIG 36

Logio Trade Administrator

71

72

73

73

83

84

85

Enter shareholder ID

Shareholder...	Shareholder...	Proxy ID	Voted	Num Edits	Attending
219032	Bill French	ORA329	false	0	true
219032	Bill French	DEL2948	true	2	false

FIG 3H

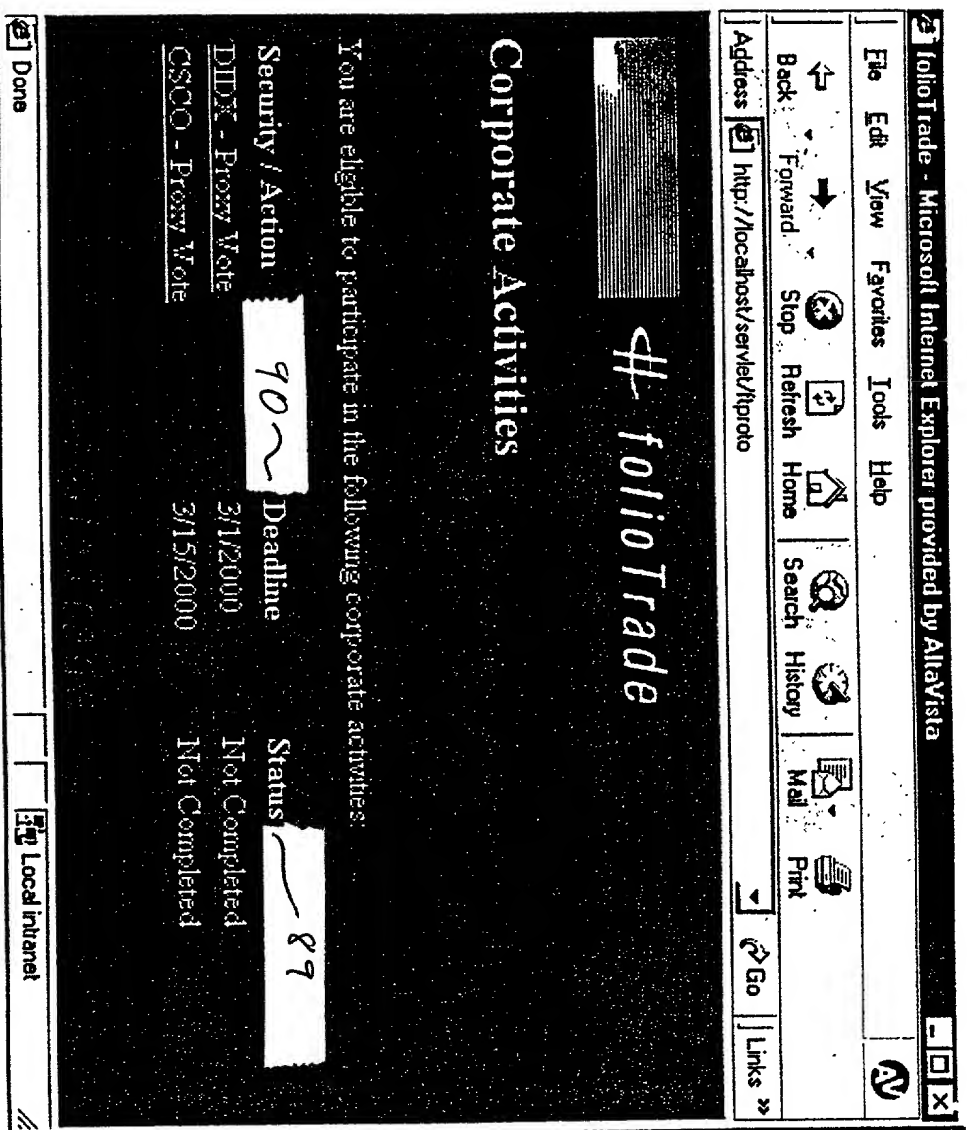


FIG 3H



Didax Company



DEAR FELLOW STOCKHOLDER:

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

STATIONARY

POXI

100%	100%
------	------

Corporate Activities

**NOTICE OF
99TH ANNUAL
MEETING AND
PROXY
STATEMENT
THURSDAY, MAY
4, 1999
AT 9:45 A.M.
HOLLISTON
POINT
HILL AND**

DEAR FELLOW STOCKHOLDER:

You are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Bank Company at the Hotel Midpoint, 1104 and Market Streets, Wilmington, Delaware, on Tuesday, May 4, 1999 at 9:45 a.m. This booklet includes the Notice of Annual Meeting and the Proxy Statement describes the business to be transacted, and provides other information concerning the Company of which you are a shareholder.

The principal business of the Annual Meeting will be the election, ratification of the appointment of the independent directors, approval of an increase in the number of authorized shares of

	(b) Local intranet
--	--------------------

FIG 3K

79

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search History Mail Print

Address http://localnet.8080/wwww/epi/choi/ready/switchboard.jsp

Go Links

4 folioTrade

Didax, Inc.
ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 11/10/99 AT 10:00 AM PST FOR HOLDERS AS OF 09/13/99
CUSIP: 17275R102

1. Directors recommend a vote for election of the following directors

<input type="checkbox"/> Carol A. Bartz	✓	Management	OneShare	AT&T
<input type="checkbox"/> John T. Chambers	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> Mary A. Cillo	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> Dr. James F. Gibbons	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> Edward R. Kozel	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> James C. Morgan	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> John P. Morgridge	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> Arun Saha	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> Donald T. Valentine	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> Steven M. West	✓			

2. Proposal to approve an amendment to the automatic option grant program for non-employee board members under the company's 1995 stock incentive plan.

<input type="checkbox"/> For	✓	Management	OneShare	AT&T
<input type="checkbox"/> Against	-			
<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	-			

3. Proposal to approve an amendment to the company's bylaws to increase the authorized number of directors to a maximum of fifteen (15).

<input type="checkbox"/> For	✓	Management	OneShare	AT&T
<input type="checkbox"/> Against	-			
<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	-			

4. Proposal to approve a certificate of amendment to increase the authorized number of shares of common stock from 5,400,000,000 to 10,000,000,000.

<input type="checkbox"/> For	✓	Management	OneShare	AT&T
<input type="checkbox"/> Against	-			
<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	-			

5. Proposal to ratify the selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP as the company's independent accountants for the fiscal year ending July 29, 2000.

<input type="checkbox"/> For	✓	Management	OneShare	AT&T
<input type="checkbox"/> Against	-			
<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	-			

Submit Vote Poll Your Attend Meeting

Done

Local Internet

92
93
94

99

FIG 31

IN THE UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As the below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CORPORATE VOTING**, filed herewith.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

None

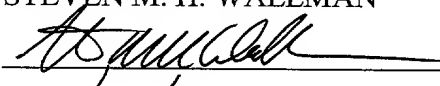
I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false

statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute said application, to make alterations and amendments therein, to receive the patent, and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

Frank Pietrantonio	(Reg. No. 32,289)
Robert Hails	(Reg. No. 39,702)
Michael N. Haynes	(Reg. No. 40,014)
Michael P. Fortkort	(Reg. No. 35,141)

Please address all correspondence to Michael N. Haynes, KENYON & KENYON, 1500 K Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20005. Telephone calls should be made to Michael N. Haynes at (202) 220-4247.

Inventor	:	STEVEN M. H. WALLMAN
Inventor's Signature	:	
Date	:	<u>3/25/00</u>
Residence	:	9332 Ramey Lane Great Falls, Virginia 22066-2025

Citizenship	:	U.S.A.
Post Office Address	:	Same as above.